

Summative Final Report

Lisa Brand-Avila

EDLD 5388 Educational Technology Leadership Internship

Professor K. Abernathy

May 16, 2010

**Position Statement and Technology Leadership Goals**

Technology tools in the classroom such as online collaborative tools and smart objects will replace more traditional models of teaching in the next one to two years. Students need these tools to maintain a learning environment that is relevant, current and steeped in real-world situations. Teachers will assume the role of coach in the effort to integrate technology tools with existing curriculum.

As a leader in educational technology, staying abreast of quickly changing technology landscapes via research, modeling appropriate technology use in the classroom and creating networks of professional learning communities is imperative for success. Developing short and long term professional development goals will ensure up-to-date knowledge on changes in educational technology.

Attending yearly conferences such as TCEA (Texas Computer Education Association) and sharing information via school-based professional development sessions is a short-term goal. Additionally, hosting cohort-based professional development opportunities such as group collaboration on integrating technology such as blogs and wikis into classrooms to connect students outside the classroom walls is another short-term goal. Providing a daily model of technology integration in the classroom and creating an environment of collaboration and trust among teachers willing to implement new and upcoming strategies such as online collaboration tools, smart objects, mobiles, and personalized web tools will slowly influence a wave of change among teachers.

Long term goals include a career shift from classroom teacher and grade level technology administrator to campus leader in educational technology. Pursuing a doctorate degree in educational technology leadership will open possibilities beyond the campus to a wider influence of district leadership. Creating collaboration between private sector businesses and education opens a realm of community leadership opportunity. I am a partner in Raining Popcorn Media, whose mission is to connect private and nonprofit companies such as Reliant Energy, National City Bank, Edwards Aquifer, Houston Metro Authority and others to educators. Each company has much to offer in terms of

economics, science, social studies, ecology, etc. and has the resources to offer lesson plans, online learning modules, and gaming activities to educators free of charge via the internet. My long-term goal is to commit full time to continuing the mission of Raining Popcorn Media.

### **Vision of Educational Technology**

Aligning personal educational leadership goals with the 2009 Horizon K-12 Report is crucial to staying abreast of the rapidly changing scene in educational technology. Expectations, according to the 2009 Horizon K-12 Report for the next one to two years, is reflected in short-term goals of using collaborative tools in the classroom to create relevance and a link for students to the “real world” beyond the classroom or school doors. Aligning slightly longer-term goals to the use of hand-helds and mobiles opens possibilities to ensure that every student has equal technological access. The cost of these devices will continue to drop as more technologies are developed and enter the competitive market. The size of the devices, their mobility, and their cost will all contribute to the integration of these technologies into schools and classrooms. Cost savings will further be recognized by school districts as data warehousing becomes more flexible via the introduction of cloud computing options, flexing with districts’ needs for storing data. Long-term goals aligned with the increase in smart objects (some exist today, but not widespread) and the use of the personal web will ensure that educational technology doesn’t fall behind commercial technology. Introduction of these tools is necessary in real-time as we prepare our students for a rapidly changing technological world.

### **Master’s Program Reflection**

Attitude is synonymous with aptitude. With a good attitude and a willingness to stay committed and focused on the goal, much can be accomplished. Beginning the program, I was apprehensive. I had questions. How was I going to find time in my busy schedule to pursue a graduate degree? Would I be able to accomplish this degree online given my level of technology proficiency? Was I too rusty having

graduated from college two decades ago to be successful? As I dove in head first to the challenge, each question was answered. The journey was not easy. Fatigue is a powerful and insidious detriment.

Reflecting back, though, the journey is similar to a marathon. While running the race, one is focusing on the finish line. When at the finish line, one reflects on the race.

I label myself a digital immigrant (Prensky, 2001). If I compare myself to the digital natives (Prensky, 2001), even the first grade ones, I feel insecure and unsure about my level of knowledge. Recognizing that as an educator I am a mentor, a coach and facilitator puts me on a learning path that is conducive to progress for both the educator and the student. A comforting paradox in educational technology is that most of us are learning together, as much of what is to come is not yet discovered. The knowledge that something can be done using technology is the antecedent to the knowledge of how to accomplish the task. It is this spirit of innovation that continues to forge us ahead finding new ways to integrate technology into learning.

A positive, can-do attitude is critical. A thirst for problem-solving, a desire to think outside the box and the release of control to our future adults is imperative. If I can sit back, offer my assistance, and let my students take the reins, much will be accomplished.

### **Essential Courses**

The six essential courses that I believe were most beneficial are the following (in ranked order of benefit.)

- *EDLD 5301 Research* – Having been away from academic research for so long (over 20 years), this course was a good refresher on how to report research findings, how to locate relevant research, and how to write a good research paper. New information sources such as online journals and internet articles were outlined in this course. While not the most riveting of courses, EDLD 5301 Research prepared me well for subsequent courses.

- *EDLD 5306 Fundamentals of Educational Technology* – This course built the excitement for the whole program. Fundamentals laid the groundwork for all that would be covered more in depth later in the program. I enjoyed this course the most, although I ranked it second to Research due to my specific need for a refresher in research.
- *EDLD 5368 Instructional Design* – This course should have been one of the first courses I took. All the other assignments from previous courses should have been modeled from this course. While I have had exposure to backwards design in recent strategic planning meetings and development of curriculum goals, this course outlined the necessary steps for developing assessment first, then creating learning goals.
- *EDLD 5364 Teaching with Technology* – Teaching with Technology focused on learning styles and assistive technologies to reach all students. The use of Universal Design Learning (UDL) gave a framework for lesson development that ensured that all areas in learning were addressed and all students could have access to the technology introduced.
- *EDLD 5365 Web Mastering* – This course was the most difficult course for me as I had a limited knowledge of web design and web site creation. The concept of Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) was a new concept to me and required that I delve deeply into the subject to understand the more technical aspects of web design. I had to hire a tutor for this class to understand the depth it provided.
- *EDLD 5333 Leadership for Accountability* – This course was the least interesting to me; however, it was the course that forced me to think like an administrator. Without a close look at data and understanding strengths and weaknesses of a school or district, decisions would not be made on the basis on data. Data mining is not my favorite activity, but delving deeply into the data provided a new vision and understanding of who we as a district and school teach well and those we need to teach better.

**Overall Degree Program Reflections**

Upon first considering pursuing a master's degree, Educational Technology Leadership was not offered. When I was ready to enroll, this opportunity presented itself. I would have been far more in my comfort zone choosing a degree program such as Reading Specialist, but was enticed by the newness and challenge this degree plan offered.

Overall, I feel that the degree plan prepared me well for a position such as campus educational technologist. I do feel that an internship would be necessary to prepare me for a district educational technologist, as more experience is needed to create a vision and hone the leadership skills necessary to create a strategic plan and goals to reach said vision.

Most of the classes offered in the program were timely and relevant. Most classes seemed well thought out and relevant to the educational technology leadership degree. I did feel, though, that several classes such as EDLD 5344 School Law and EDLD 5335 Curriculum Management were geared towards preparing me for a principalship, which I am not seeking.

As with any new program, some ambiguity exists. The requirements of the capstone course were not communicated early in the program, so the final course, EDLD 5388 Educational Technology Leadership Internship was a bit confusing. Also, some confusion emerged in the attempt to change course deadlines. This was rectified, though, by professors and coaches offering more individualized assistance to students based on their rate of completion.

I would recommend this course to any of my colleagues wanting to explore new and exciting ways to integrate technology into their classrooms and curriculum. My opinion is that many of these courses should be required professional development for teachers to ensure that they stay in tune with students' needs to make learning relevant and engaging.

**Professional Development Plans**

Professional development plans for the next three years include a combination of short term and long term goals. In the short term, my goal is to plan my classroom design next year to feature elements of the Inspired Classroom. The Inspired Classroom is a model that takes the integrated computing approach from the secondary level to the elementary level by integrating computer use and access “seamlessly” into the curriculum (Wilson, 2006). It was developed by teacher Jerram Froese in Irving, Texas. I’ve become a member of the Inspired Classroom Wiki and hope to integrate this design and framework into my own elementary classroom.

I plan to continue my duties as grade level technology facilitator, assisting teachers on my grade level with technical issues and modeling ideas for integrating technology into the classroom. I will continue to serve on this committee by attending campus vertical team technology meetings. I will continue to serve on the District’s Strategic Planning Committee: Equal Access, developing ideas and goals for ensuring that technology is accessible to all students across all socioeconomic subgroups. We’ll continue to explore ways that can ensure this equal access such as extended library hours and supervised library access to computers, check-out systems for laptops, free wi-fi access points in the community, etc.

I plan to continue to attend conferences such as TCEA (Texas Computer Education Association) and various other webinars to keep up to date and abreast of rapidly changing technology applications. I have plans to attend autism training and explore the use of assistive technologies in reaching children with autism.

Long term goals include a shift from classroom teacher to campus technology facilitator, given the position becomes available. I am not ready to make this transition for another 3 years, as I want to continue to explore technology application in early elementary classrooms a while longer. Beyond five to ten years, I plan on shifting into a post-education position of full-time partner and collaborator with

Raining Popcorn Media, whose mission is to join private and non-profit sectors with educators to provide community based education projects free of charge to educators.



# Lisa Brand-Avila

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## **OBJECTIVE**

I seek to enhance my teaching skills and curriculum through the integration of technology in early elementary classrooms. I strive to further my knowledge and application of technology through research and professional learning communities.

## **EDUCATION**

### **Lamar University, Beaumont, TX**

Master of Education in Educational Technology Leadership  
*Candidate, August 2010*

### **University of Texas at San Antonio, San Antonio, TX**

Teaching Certificate, Special Education  
*May 2000*  
Emergency certification

### **Texas A&M University, College Station, TX**

Bachelor of Business Administration, Management  
*May 1988*  
Focus on general business administration

## **EMPLOYMENT**

### **Woodridge Elementary, Alamo Heights ISD, San Antonio, TX**

*August 2005 - present*

#### **Teacher**

- 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade Title I Reading
- First grade teacher
- First grade technology facilitator

### **Alamo Heights Junior School, Alamo Heights ISD, San Antonio, TX**

*August 2004 - 2005*

#### **Teacher**

- 6<sup>th</sup> grade reading teacher
- 7<sup>th</sup> grade remedial reading teacher
- Technology facilitator

### **Bill Brown Elementary School, Comal ISD, Spring Branch, TX**

*January 1, 2000 – August 2004*

#### **Teacher**

- Third grade Title I Math
- Reading Recovery teacher
- Facilitated reading lab
- Facilitated computer reading lab

**Neiman Marcus, Dallas, TX**  
*December, 1989– August 1992*

**Human Resources**

- Payroll
- Long Term Disability Administrator
- Benefits Coordinator

**Texas Oil & Gas, Dallas, TX**  
*June, 1988 – December, 1989*

**401K Administrator**

- Distributed 401K funds
- Conducted Employee Information Sessions

**SKILLS**

**Computer Skills** - Microsoft Office, Online collaborative tools, Educational software applications, iMovie, iPhoto, etc.

**Personal Interests** - Member, Southwest Minority Business Council  
Member, Independent Publishers Association

**Publications** – Author of *Rainbow Raspas* and *Joshua's Pinata* bilingual children's books published by Raining Popcorn Media.

### References

Johnson, L., Levine, A., Smith, R., and Smythe, T. (2009). The 2009 Horizon Report: K-12 Edition.

Austin, Texas: The New Media Consortium.

Prensky, M. (2001). Digital natives, digital immigrants. *On the Horizon*, 9(5), 1-6.

Wilson, D. "About Inspired Classrooms ." *Inspired Classrooms* . WIKI Spaces, 08 Nov 2006. Web. 16 May 2010. <<http://inspiredclassrooms.wikispaces.com/About+Inspired+Classrooms>>.